

THE WAR ON THE CORSET IN PARIS, THE HOME OF THE CORSET



GREEK-FIGURE WITHOUT CORSET.



A HYGIENIC CORSET WITH WAIST-FREE.



THE HARD STEEL CORSET.



LOW-BUST CORSET SUPPORTING THE ABDOMEN.

WHEN Paris, the home of the corset, begins to talk about abolishing it, it is quite time we took the matter up and considered it seriously. If the corset goes into disuse, think of all the hygienic clubs of advanced women, all the physician specialists who will crow in triumph and say "I told you so!" But the question is, Can women go without their corsets and still be a delight to the eye? Have we not all grown too accustomed to the clearly defined waist-line, the curve of the hips, to admire "lovely woman" divested of any bones and steel, perhaps in some cases (sad that it be to confess it of the sex) looking like a bag of jelly, flaccid around with a string. Of course this is taking the worst view of it, but it is a woman's view, and as the following facts show, is a view shared by many. The corset is in a stage of improvement, but not of abolition entirely.

It has been recently quoted that several of our leading actresses are abandoning the corset. It is true that Miss Elsie de Wolfe (now in Europe) wears only a ribbon corset, that is, a tiny band around the waist, just drawing the waist in slightly, and thus leaving something to button skirts on. Miss de Wolfe is very slight and can well afford to renounce the steels.

Any one who has seen Mrs. Leslie Carter in "Zaza" will readily see that she cannot be hampered by corsets. She said to the Journal yesterday:

"O, no, I don't wear corsets. I gave them up long ago. The corset impeded the action of my arms and restricted the freedom and ease of my breath. Now I wear simply a ribbon corset band just to button my skirts upon; but I wear even this loose and of course it is virtually no corset at all. If I were stout I certainly should be obliged to wear a corset, but I certainly should wear it loose. Tight lacing is vulgar, and I think many stout women make their size all the more pronounced either by badly shaped corsets or else lacing them in too tight. I believe in comfort as well as artistic grace in form, and many of my friends share my views."

Said Mrs. Dudley, her mother, with one of her charming smiles:

"I never wore a corset until I was married and had children; but, dear me, now I'm getting so stout, what should I look like without one?"

"O, no, the corset will never be quite abolished as long as there are fleshy women; but I think it is becoming much more modified in make and use."

Mme. Macherot, the well-known French modiste, did not believe anything would ever come of the new movement in Paris.

"Why, Frenchwomen get too stout, and what could they do without something to compress the flesh? About forty the average Frenchwoman is plump, and at fifty getting very fat. No nation thinks more of appearances than the French, and its women will never give up corsets. Mme. Peters, the best corsetmaker in Paris now, is making a very low corset, short on the hips, and much belated in front. This is the best corset for stout women, as it leaves their chest and arms free, and draws them in at the waist. Several of my customers are wearing the ribbon corset, which is extremely short, and I believe in every one wearing corsets loose. Mrs. Leslie Carter needs no corsets. She is perfect in form, and it would be a shame to put them upon her. I know Bernhard wears no corsets, but she, again, has no need for them. As for English women, Ah, well! It does not matter much what they wear. In the day time they go around dressed just anyhow, and they exercise so much that their flesh is very hard and firm. In the evening, even

these stiff English girls wear corsets, and usually have the French make."

Mrs. Irene Brush, the champion woman cyclist, of Brooklyn, wears no corsets, and she is as straight and supple as a young pine. She said:

"Oh, I could not ride in stays. I like the freedom of all my muscles, and find no fatigue in holding myself erect in the saddle." Mrs. Brush thinks all women would be better without stays, speaking, of course, from a professional standpoint.

Dr. Sara Armstrong speaks decidedly and gracefully upon the subject. She says:

"I believe in keeping to the new modes and outlines, only with the figure not confined as it is in corsets. I declare against corsets, as the term is now defined, but I likewise declare against the unfeminine and masculine in woman. A reaction from the regular corset figure is now setting in from golf and other sports of the society girl of to-day, and some of the sweetest gowns displayed by actresses are being worn without stays. Of course no society

It is universally conceded that Paris is the home of fashion, and that French women, while not more charming or more beautiful than women of other nationalities, certainly know how to dress. Much to our surprise, therefore, we now learn that there is a war against the corset declared in Paris, and that several leading fashionable dames of society in that city are advocating the abandonment of the corset. Coming from Paris, the Journal has decided to take the matter up and hear the pros and cons upon this subject. Among the well-known women in Paris who have bravely foregone the corset is La Duchesse D'Uzes. This lady is a prominent leader and originator of fashions, and her influence is far-reaching. She is the originator of the automobile, was famous in the Boulanger affair, and now boldly disclaims against the corset. When such women as she—a representative woman combining so many attractions at home, in the ball-room, in the sporting field and in the more serious relations of life—when such women, and French women, too, living in the heart of Paris, send abroad the story that there is a corset war, it is quite necessary for us to consider it, too.

Three Notable American Women Who Never Wear Corsets.



MISS ELSIE DE WOLFE



MRS. LESLIE CARTER



MRS. RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

girl has any ambition to be either a Dr. Mary Walker or a Helen of Troy, and garments that compromise between Grecian draperies and "Mother Hubbards" have no attraction for them. I simply advocate the sort of gown that outlines the body, and defines the natural waist line. I think even a stout woman, who hitherto has despaired of being anything but monstrous, can, by careful teaching, adopt a style that will reduce her flesh and make her comfortable. One stout woman said to me: "How dreadful I should look without corsets!" I replied, "Doubtless you would look much better than you do now." It all depends upon one's exercise, habits, and perseverance in right management of the body.

The way women are lacing now is simply dreadful. This barbarous fashion almost died out for a time, the more estimable society women giving themselves more generous waist lines, but this Spring the look of the tailor-made frocks is shocking. The

waists have no beauty nor grace, and are simply deformed. I think the corsets that are offered in the shops to give one a "splendid form" are just the ones to be avoided! I especially denounce the French corset, which is so cut and so boned as to compress the figure into an unnatural shape. Instead of falling into lines of perfect grace and symmetry, there are certain relief corsets, and I have a model in mind which it is my intention to introduce, hoping it may prove a boon to my suffering sister now under the stern dominion of the corset. "Tight lacing utterly destroys symmetry, and stout women make a fatal mistake in so doing. It makes them red in the face, short-breathed, and the figure is ruined. I will guarantee to so instruct a woman that within a few months she will have no need of corsets."

Dr. Le Roy Brown, No. 70 West Eighty-first street, has original and decided views. He is a specialist for women, and said yesterday:

"Well, I am a little different from my brothers of the old school. I believe that tight lacing is a crying shame, distorting not only the figure out of all natural shape but displacing as well the liver and the organs of the stomach. On the other hand, a woman who has always worn corsets needs a certain amount of support that have given her. And a stout woman needs some such support. You know the figure of a woman who has never worn corsets and one who has is very different, and I am sure it would be best never to have put them on. But, as we cannot change the world, let us modify it, and if you women know of some slight support, worn loosely, which will do away with the stiff steel, I would strongly advocate it."

What conclusion then do we reach regarding this interesting part of woman's appearance? Doubtless it would have been better had our women never fallen under the fascination of these rigid, unlovely articles, and doubtless the hygienic rules are broken and fruitfully distorted by their usage, but, while the practical woman of to-day admits all these facts, and is willing to compromise in the matter by modifying the corset and forswearing tight lacing, still we dare positively affirm that, no matter how bravely a few of our French sisters may try to suppress it entirely, the corset, in some slight degree at least, will stay, in both senses of the word.

It is, like other things most in vogue open to attacks upon it, even from its earliest friends, the fickle Parisians, who have made it famous, and it will be interesting to watch its attitude for the future. Will the high English corset, straight and unbending, triumph in the end, or will the low-cut Calve corset, or the unlovely reform corset, or the dainty little ribbon corset prove the winner of fair woman's approval? We hear the slender reader say: "Oh, nothing but a ribbon corset for me! We hear the plump, uncomfortable stout matron exclaim: "They are all dreadfully hot, and I love to get them off at night and breathe, but—well, we've got to live!" We hear the athletic, the hygienic, the advanced woman vigorously protest, and hold aloft the reform corset as the only safe and reliable. Which shall it be? As Paris started the contest, we shall look to Paris to end it, and we shall be satisfied with whatever our dainty French sister determines upon.

Physicians, who see no beauty in lines that were made by suffering, say that the corset is abandoned we may look for a new race, a race of "perfect women" nobly formed, and of such men as tried the earth, "When Knighthood Was in Flower."

BEGINNING OF THE CORSET.



ABDOMINAL CORSET FOR A STOUT WOMAN.



A HIGH FRENCH CORSET.



THE HIGH ENGLISH CORSET.

PROFESSOR SYLE'S CRITICISM OF THE STAGE.

ESSAYS in Dramatic Criticism, with Impressions of Some Modern Plays" is the title of an attractive book by Professor L. Dupont Syle, of the Department of English Literature in the University of California.

Professor Syle dedicates the volume, by permission, as a mark of appreciation.

"To Mrs. Phoebe A. Hearst, whose thoughtful and loving generosity has made possible to so many the attainment of ideals."

In these essays the author sets forth in an entertaining style the history of the modern drama from the time it first attained a recognized position as an art in England and France.

He enters into a lively discussion of "Is the actor's art unworthy?" and cites Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Booth and Sir Henry Irving to show that the best types of manhood and intellectual genius adopt the stage as a profession.

Professor Syle sets a high standard for the actor and actress in his chapter on "Some essentials in the actor's art." Temperament, sensibility and intellect

are the qualities which he insists an actor must have as a ground work. By adding to these perfect elocution, repose, manner and voice the actor holds out the hope that any conscientious actor may attain a high place in the theatrical profession.

"The Endowed Theatre" is a subject to which Professor Syle devotes a chapter. He declares that public endowments are as necessary to the theatre as to a college in order to make the drama an educational influence.

"At last," he says, "the English are beginning to remove from themselves the reproach I have stated. They are educating their people up to an appreciation of the best that has been thought and done in the drama. They are doing this by the only means possible, that is, by regarding the drama seriously as a fine art, and not as a form of speculative investment which must be made to return fifteen to twenty per cent upon the capital put in. This last-mentioned way of looking at the drama is the one prevalent in the United States. The first-mentioned way has long been prevalent in France and Germany. That is why

anything worse than a box of Melochino's or a Sunday at Brighton. Of course, you sometimes left actresses' photographs lying about. But we knew where you bought them."

"Does any man ever buy actresses' photographs?"

"Well, you were rather a cub then," I admitted.

"This is a very painful discussion," said he.

"Oh, don't apologize," I murmured.

He sighed. "Old man, I'd like to see you give up that sort of thing."

"Which sort of thing?"

"You know. The sort of thing I used to go in for."

"You mean cigarettes and the National Sunday League?"

He sighed again. It was a diplomatic evasion. "Marriage," said he, sententiously, "opens a man's eyes. He sees things in a new light. He realizes how wrong certain things are that he once delighted in. To have a tender, trusting woman committed to his daily care—"

"Oh, I say!" I exclaimed.

"You don't understand," said he. "You have no responsibilities."

"I have friends," said I.

"I don't mind you saying that if you think it smart," he replied with an unconscious air of long suffering.

"Look here, Cheedle, don't be an ass," I shouted.

"You remember Balaam's ass, Phil?"

"No. I think he must have been before my time."

In spite of himself he laughed. At once the conversation became rational. He was taking me home to dinner. With in sight of the house, he said:

THE TYPICAL FRENCH FIGURE AND FRENCH CORSET.

The French and German theatres are so much better than ours. When I say better I mean that they present in better shape than do ours a large number of plays that appeal to moral and intelligent people; that is, to the people whose hearts and brains keep the world going and the race advancing."

The book is published by William R. Jenkins, No. 631 Sixth avenue, New York.

A Bridegroom Without a Past.

CHEEDLE has lately acquired a past. Out of his imagination he has built up a lurid conception of his sinful bachelor self which frightens him. The other day I tried to reassure him quite unsuccessfully.

"My dear Cheedle," I said, "you have nothing whatever to reproach yourself with."

"Ah, if I could only believe that," he sighed out. "But you know as well as I do what sort of a life I used to lead."

"Clotrate!" said I.

"Hellish!" said he. "I was a devil of a fellow."

"Why, we used to call you the saint," I said.

"Of course," said he, frowning. "It's very friendly of you to talk that kind of rot."

"But we did," I protested.

"Oh, in irony, you mean?"

"Not in all sincerity. Of course we didn't let you know. We thought it might offend you."

"Now, my dear Wroughtnightr," said he, "let me give you a word in season."

"Thanks. But—as the servant girls say—I never accept valuable presents from gentlemen."

"This young man's craving after an evil reputation is unhealthy in the extreme. You'll repent of it some day."

I was justly irritated. "It seems to me," said I, "that it is you who are doing the craveng."

"I don't understand you," said he, sternly.

"You know you were a perfect puritan."

"I don't deceive myself, old man."

"You kept your misdeeds pretty dark, anyhow. Nobody ever found you out in

"I am so glad you get on well with my wife, Phil. If the subject of my—my Past would ever crop up, be a true friend, would you?"

I promised. And a few days later I redeemed my promise amply. I met Mrs. Cheedle in Piccadilly, and she pined for tea. It is not my fault if Mrs. Cheedle thinks that tea in a Piccadilly shop is rather dissipated.

"I am going to scold you, Mr. Wroughtnightr," said she, "for your good. I think you are leading a very useless life."

"It is useful to me," I replied meekly.

"In fact, I don't quite see how I could get on without it."

"You waste so much of your time."

"As time is of no value to me, that is not a great extravagance."

"You keep bad hours."

"Which are the bad hours, Mrs. Cheedle?"

"As if I knew!" she cried. "You smoke a great deal, too."

"I confess it."

"You go to music halls."

"Alas!"

"You belong to too many clubs."

"But I only frequent the others."

"You know too many people."

"There are too many people, I'm afraid."

"You attend race meetings. You—"

"I certainly begin to believe I am in a bad way," said I. "I had not thought of it before. Thank you, Mrs. Cheedle. But you must not be too hard on me. All men are not like your husband, you know."

"Why don't you get married, too?"

"Marriage would not alter me," said I, gloomily.

"It has altered Josie."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Cheedle. It has not altered him in the least."

She grew pale. "What do you mean?"

she gasped.

"I know him so well, you see."

She half rose. "You mean to tell me—"

"A saint, Mrs. Cheedle," I cried, earnestly: "an angel in trousers!"

"Don't be absurd," she said, laughing.

"I assure you, Mrs. Cheedle," said I, "that a more innocent man than your husband does not walk this earth."

Extraordinary as it may appear, she was greatly annoyed. "Nonsense!" she said, sharply.

"It is true," I said simply.

"I know better," she retorted. "There is too much that is evil in Josie, unfortunately." The last word sounded dreadfully like an afterthought.

"There is no more vice in him than in a kitten," said I. "He was always like that."

"Of course you are his friend. You would be sure to say so. It is very loyal and nice of you; but I— You can't deceive me."

Evidently, no man is a saint to the woman who loves him!

"I have no wish to do so," said I. "There is no need."

"My dear Mr. Wroughtnightr," said she, with thinly veiled impatience, "do you honestly maintain that Josie is any better, morally, than the average man?"

"Incomparably better," said I.

"Then you are mistaken."

"Really, I think not. We used to call him 'The Saint.'"

"The Saint! How absurd!"

"It was a saying among us, 'As innocent as Cheedle!'"

"Nonsense!" she said again, flushing angrily. "I don't believe it."

I bowed and was silent.

"All men are more or less alike," said she.

LONDON HAS A HOSPITAL FOR ITS BIRDS.

HOW many Londoners know of the Birds' Hospital down at Norwood? A canary with a broken leg, your ready parrot, your prize poultry with tuberculosis, your racing pigeon with a touch of "liver"—each is welcomed there and restored.

This odd institution is in charge of Professor Vale, who was led to the closer study of birds' ailments from the fact that his own died under the ordinary treatment. He made frequent experiments with medicines, and now, after fourteen years of study, he considers himself capable of curing almost any feathered creature suffering from accident or ailment. Smallpox—even the winged blimps get it—can be banished, "swelled head" can be reduced, tuberculosis can be exterminated, while minor ills have all their cures.

"I cured a valuable racing pigeon a few days ago," said the doctor. "It came here ill and wasted, and when I sent it back it was gaining flesh and ready to fly for a cup. Larger birds? Yes, swans and turkeys. I have attended both."

"I haven't any canaries on wooden legs here, but I have often set a broken one. I use a large quill, split open, and lined with cotton wool as a splint; it keeps the limb quite firm. Many canaries that I treat are suffering from wrong feeding. Most books of canaries say that canary seed is the best food, whereas it is about the most unsuitable, with, perhaps, the exception of millet."

Mr. Vale explained the various constituents of canary seed, and demonstrated that they were in very different proportion from that required by nature. Starch is the great enemy of the human race according to Mr. Vale. If the system was entirely free from starch foods one would throw off disease without effort, and the modern Briton would live, in his forebears, to one hundred and twenty years.

Mr. Vale recounts with glee the history of a white owl which he owned that simply revelled in a diet consisting of the remains of birds that had died of different diseases sent to his master for post-mortem purposes, and yet remained healthy.

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I did not reply.

"Aren't they, Mr. Wroughtnightr?"

"Everything is as you say, Mrs. Cheedle," I said, carefully betraying my annoyance.

"Oh, was I rude? I beg your pardon. Do be nice, Mr. Wroughtnightr."

"You asked my opinion of Joseph Sanders Cheedle. I gave it," said I, "honestly. 'But you may be mistaken, Mr. Wroughtnightr.'"

"Of course," said I. "I admit that. I you don't mind, Mrs. Cheedle, we will change the subject."

She looked at me gloomily for some seconds. "I don't think I ever spent a dull afternoon. I saw Cheedle a day or two later. His manner was repelling."

"Gentle Heavens, man!" he cried. "What have you been saying to my wife?"

"How should I know?" I rejoined, stupefied.

"Were you drunk?"

"Of course I was! Why ask?"

"I beg your pardon, old chap. But really her attitude toward me is unbearable. You know that photograph of Lottie's?"

"The one you thought was Lottie's, you mean. The man did you, Cheedle."

"Are you going to drag up that old stupid argument again? Anyhow, the wig got hold of it. Who is this?" said she.

"My cousin—in Australia," I replied.

"Tights?" said she. "What do you mean?"

"Your friends will tell you," said I. "So I came to you."

"She asked me about your past the other day," I murmured. "And I told her you hadn't one."

"I can see you overdid it," he growled. And, after all, perhaps I did.